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ABSTRACT

A great variety of books are available for children which can be used to develop literary appreciation and literacy skills while aiding them in sharpening their awareness and realizing their human potential. These books can be found in many categories, some of which are easy-to-read books, historical and modern fiction which mirrors reality, modern fantasy, and biography and autobiography. In a complete reading and language program, several areas receive support from the use of trade books, such as conceptual development, vocabulary expansion, awareness of a variety of syntactical patterns, awareness of the symbolic function of language, flexibility of style and usage, and decoding and encoding skills. (A list of books and authors is included.) (JM)

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# USE OF "TRADE BOOKS" IN A READING PROGRAM

Paper presented at IRA Convention
Anaheim, California
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A major part of any reading-language program must be to realize literacy goals as well as to realize literary goals. One goal of literature programs is to help children learn to decode, encode, and comprehend the native tongue. Another is to help them know and appreciate the literature of this and other cultures. And then there is a highly significant personal goal: to aid the individual in his awareness and realization of human potential. This last goal provides an instructional perspective for developing literary appreciation and literacy skills as means to a larger goal - that of human development.

THE USE OF TRADE BOOKS IN A READING PROGRAM as a title for this session is meant not only to introduce you to types and samples of children's literature, but to recommend more detailed resources for future use so that you might realize these purposes in your reading-language arts program.

If the great potential of literature is to be realized, an extensive variety of life experiences must be available, ranging on a continum from the formal classics to the child's own stories that create imagery and emotional effect.

The "EASY TO READ" books are a special form of prose which has been a welcome innovation for children in the early stages of mastering reading skills and for children who have been slower than age-mates in acquiring decoding skills.

Because of their restricted vocabulary, many of these books will not fulfill the aesthetic and language goals of literature, but because of their other contributions they deserve a place in the recommended range of offerings. For some children, these books provide the necessary bridge between being a listener and being a reader. Some of the titles I can heartily recommend which, once read to children, the children will probably take and read it for themselves include AND I MEAN IT, STANLEY; ALBERT'S TOOTHACHE; YOU'RE THE SCAREDY CAT, and AN ELEPHANT IN MY BED. The latter is a light-hearted story of a boy who tries every possible hiding place for an elephant but finds none large enough. The ending has the elephant returning to the circus with its father, seemingly satisfying children.

Many of you are aware that many authors, such as Dr. Seuss, make clever use of a very limited vocabulary. They expand the language in special ways, such as rhyming or using nonsense. An example of this is HOP ON POP, wherein the concept of size comparison is conveyed in colorful, humorous fashion. Many of the easy readers are aimed especially at boys (the books of Olaf Reads, for example) and many others deal with childhood frustrations. Try Carla Stevens' HOORAY FOR PIG about a pig who is afraid to swim or Constance Greene's THE EARS OF LOUIS or Syd Hoff's I SHOULD HAVE STAYED IN BED.

Many works of fiction appeal to their audience by mirroring reality. This credibility strengthens reader identification and appeals to the child who feels he has grown beyond stories such as those where animals are personified. Sharon Bell Mathis' heart-warming story of a little girl who really shouldn't be without earrings fits this category so well.

Realism occurs in both historical and modern fiction. In a bicentennial year, there are many books about young people during America's colonial and frontier days. JOHNNY TREMAIN and A HEAD ON HER SHOULDERS remain favorites. A lone survivor of an Indian tribe allows his own capture and proceeds to tell his story to the white man in ISHI, LAST OF HIS TRIBE. A young girl struggles to pass the tribal ritual into womanhood and learns to face fear in BRIGHT SUNSET: THE STORY OF AN INDIAN GIRL. And in ISLAND OF THE BLUE DOLPHINS, a twelve-year old Indian girl finds herself stranded alone and must cope with the daily demands or survival. In ZIA, a newly published sequel, Scott O'Dell again useshhistory as the mainspring for revealing the truth about human beings: their passion, their grief. Taking the point of view that Karana is still on the island, he invents a niece for her in the character of Zia, a young Indian who lives at the Santa Barbara Mission and who dreams of sailing to the island to rescue her aunt. The two women are finally reunited. The fact that they have no language to communicate with makes little difference; they share a common past.

In JOCKO: A Legend of the American Revolution, Washington's fight for independence is viewed in the eyes of a young Black boy.

A large quantity of writing for children falls into the category of modern realistic fiction. This mode of writing is especially appropriate for content designed to contribute to the reader's self-knowledge, through stories that display the frustrations of being handicapped such as found in A DANCE TO STILL MUSIC, a sensitive story of a young girl coping with her feelings of isolation when she loses her hearing. Many books in this category also lend themselves to helping children deal with life situations relevant to the age involved. Terry in NO ARM IN LEFT FIELD hits and catches well but has difficulties making long throws but feels he has an additional handicap - that of being Black. Chip in JINX GLOVE willingly exchanges his dad's old baseball glove for a new one until he discovers it's "jinxed". But Chip matures and the text encourages thoughtfulness for the feelings of others. Judy Blume captures the joys, fears, and uncertainty that surrounds a young girl approaching adolescence in a book that's almost a classic of its type, ARE YOU THERE, GOD? IT'S ME, MARGARET! And Isabelle Holland tells a moving tale of the problems of a boy growing up in THE MAN WITHOUT A FACE.

Books about family relationships are often appropriate for children above age 5. With 6 to 8 year olds, a teacher might choose to read such books as MIRROR OF DANGER by Pamela Sykes and for the over 10 set, there's Judy Blume's BLUBBER about childhood cruelty and how it can feel and how it can backfire or Judith Viorst's ROSIE AND MICHAEL or Barbara Corcoran's THE WINGS OF TIME, a tale of a young girl's effort to free herself from a domineering uncle and learn to trust adults again. THE REAL ME is a delightful tale where Barbara realizes that the unfairness of sexism is not insurmountable. IF THERE WERE ONLY ONE GIRL IN THE WORLD, AND ONLY ONE BOY, WHO DO YOU THINK WOULD HAVE A PAPER ROUTE? Chris and Muffin don't quite believe their parents' logical explanation for everything, especially when they begin to investigate the strange things happening in their own in Avi Wortis' tale, NO MORE MAGIC. Such books as these might be read in conjunction with discussions that help to legitimize feelings of jealousy, resentment, and hurt. Role playing and creative dramatics offer all age groups opportunities to re-enact situations and to create their own solutions to the conflicts.

Modern fantasy is represented by such well-known classics and old favorites as WINNIE THE POOH and CHARLOTTE'S WEB. Most readers find greater depth in both of these books as they mature. Milne's "tiddely pom" should not mislead the the parent or teacher into offering Pooh Bear only to the young child. If he does

enjoy those stories at five or six, share them with him, but 8 or 9 (even 10 or 12) years of life experience will probably help him appreciate even more

> "If You walk up and down with your umbrella saying, 'Tut-tut, it looks like rain,' I shall do what I can by singing a little Cloud Song, such as a cloud might sing"

Mary Norton's account of the adventures of a miniature family in THE BORROWERS is another fantasy that draws the reader into the logic of a world with entirely new dimensions. THE PHANTOM TOLL BOOTH, a fantasy on location in Dictionopolis, capitalizes on the power and play of words.

Fantasy appeals to children of all ages. Favorite stories of mine include MANY MOONS and THE TROLL MUSIC for younger children, CHARLOTTE'S WEB and CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY for intermediate age children, and the WIND IN THE WILLOWS and THE HOBBITT for older children. Traditional fantasy takes several different forms including folk tales, fairy tales, fables, myths, and legends. In ARROW TO THE SUN, the author has created not only a Pueblo Indian tale but has created a book with graphic appeal to all. The tale is told first in bold oranges and black with pictures speaking for some of the text but later "power" is shown through use of other colors. Children turn the pages slowly and absorb the feeling of mystery and magic.

The brevity of fables and the presence of outstanding pictures should not mislead you into offering them only to young children. The concepts, stated

in condensed form, often challenge the intermediate reader. Brian Wildsmith's NORTH WIND AND THE SUN, wherein the gentle sun is shown to be more powerful than the blustering wind or ANDY AND THE LION, a modern version of the well-known story of Androcles and the lion are but two recommendations in this category.

A direct avenue for identifying with characters in books is the biography (and autobiography). The child can vicariously undergo the experiences of a person he admires by examining his life style, successes, and confrontations with discouragement and defeat. In such treatments, teachers and students rely heavily on authors and publishers for accuracy of information. Among my recommendations in this category are LANGSTON HUGHES, AMERICAN POET, an easy to read and comprehend treatment which permits Black children to relate and other children to understand minority problems; ROBERTO CLEMENTE tells the story of the selfless Clemente whose baseball fame was surpassed only by his service to mankind. The easy reading level expands the age range that can enjoy the story. And DR. ELIZABETH: A BIOGRAPHY OF THE FIRST WOMAN DOCTOR is a diary-style account of the first woman doctor in the United States who pioneered in fighting for women's right to serve humanity.

Several important areas of a complete reading and language program receive direct support from THE USE OF TRADE BOOKS IN A READING PROGRAM. Briefly listed, such areas include:

(a) conceptual development
(b) vocabulary expansion
(c) awareness of a variety of syntactical patterns
(d) awareness of the symbolic function of language
(e) flexibility of style and usage
(f) decoding and encoding skills

Let me touch briefly on the areas mentioned.

Concept Development

With any age at the elementary level, a teacher might feel a need to direct children's thoughts to the subject of the similarities existing among men regardless of superficial differences. For the seven and under, you might try WATCH OUT FOR CHICKEN FEET IN YOUR SOUP which encourages tolerance for different life styles.

Opportunities to contrast realistic attributes with those confined to the world of fantasy are offered by Dr. Seuss in IF I RAN THE ZOO, a delightful accompaniment to a zoo trip and to a factual study of its animals. THE ZOO FOR MISTER MUSTER can provide another kind of supplemental information.

The choice of books for concept development is extremely important, since the book may not be effective by itself. If the child has not had sufficient experience to give meaning to the material, or if the material only repeats what he already knows, it cannot serve the desired purpose.

Vocabulary Expansion

Every reading selection can expand vocabulary at some level of language

development, even picture books. Some selections offer models of rich descriptive language, while others contain vocabulary of a specialized area. TWO GOOD FRIENDS is especially good for reading aloud for vocabulary expansion and the sentence structure. Recommended for the younger set.

Free verse is especially good for helping children expand their vocabulary for purposes of effective, colorful description. A teacher might turn to Richard Lewis' MIRACLES, a collection of poems by children.

Models for sentence stretching, for adding detail description to basic information, are offered in a book such as HIT OR MYTH.

Books on specialized areas can be found for just about any subject area.

Variety in Syntactical Patterns

There are several ways teachers can help students examine and vary the syntax of a given sentence, increase their understanding of the functions of language, and work toward maximum personal effectiveness in the use of language. A number of approaches are available for developing sentence patterns. Transforming sentences from one form to another can be done very simply and is appropriate for the primary grade level. For example, in Ruth Krauss' IS THIS YOU? questions could be changed to both declarative and negative statements throughout the book.

If Ramona drank lemonade through a straw, she blew into the straw as hard as she could to see what would happen.

Children should experiment to see what sounds right and what doesn't. Substitution of phrases is especially appropriate for use with younger children, since "finding another way to say it" does not require a particular level of language maturity.

Another form of variation is to condense the sentence by eliminating redundancies.

There are several ways to vary a sentence by expansion. One obvious method is modification. By answering the HOW, WHAT, WHERE kinds of questions, children can expand a statement like "He could see a peach" to a version more like Roald Dahl's

> Not far away, in the middle of the garden, he could see the giant peach towering over everything else. (James and the Giant Peach)

Expansion can also be accomplished by combining simple sentences into a complex sentence. A sentence from Louise Fitzhugh's HARRIET THE SPY can be separated for purposes of demonstration.

> The bell rang. Pinky Whitehead jumped up. He ran down the aisle.

After making their own combined version of these thoughts, children might refer to the author's version:

> When the bell rang, Pinky Whitehead jumped up and ran down the aisle.

These methods of varying syntactic patterns must be adapted to fit the

particular language maturity level of the children involved. The important point is that in addition to classroom models of speech and written language, literature provides ready-made models for language development.

Symbolic Function

Throughout the K-6 educational experience, teachers should watch and plan for opportunities to discover and rediscover the symbolic representations of experience called language. The child begins with the content materials, using only external clues. Later, as the child begins the primary grades, he will associate certain names, phrases, or sections of a story, as a result of any number of visual or auditory clues. In a more advanced stage, they examine the origin and makeup of words.

The understanding of the symbolic function is established in an early period and continues to grow to a well-defined bridge between abstract symbols and the objects and feelings they represent.

Flexibility of Style and Usage

Since English usage undergoes continual changes, emphasis must be placed on language appropriateness relative to social settings. Such an increase in latitude produces a greater need for a broad knowledge of language at both the formal and informal levels. In addition, an increasing amount of dialect-related

speech is now finding its way into written language, some more alternatives for expression are now available for use. It is thus essential that students be aware of a variety of language forms beyond their own. Literature is one avenue through which this can be accomplished. Children can also compare formal and informal usage. One way to do this is to write an informal translation of a formal passage. This occurs naturally by recording (written or taped) a child's retelling of a story.

Decoding and Encoding Skills

Children's literature can contribute directly to all aspects of the process of breaking and reconstructing the code of language - from auditory perception to oral intonation. I'll mention but a few contributions.

For the pre-school listener or the child at the reading readiness stage, literature can provide experience in auditory perception, such as discrimination of initial consonants and rhyming. One way to provide practice in rhyming in a meaningful context is to let children supply the rhyming word in a story such as DRUMMER HOFF. One collection designed for this very purpose is TALKING TIME which uses poetry and short stories to emphasize particular phonemes in a meaningful way.

Since young children always want "to see the pictures" as they listen to

the story, they should also be given opportunities for visual discrimination. Some children begin independently to relate sounds and symbols. A book like ROAR AND MORE by Karla Kuskin offers this opportunity, as do so many of the Seuss books, such as SAM AND THE FIREFLY, in which significant messages are written in the sky by the firefly. The many books written in large print, like CARROT SEED and THE LITTLE FISH THAT GOT AWAY also aid visual discrimination for those who are able to deal with letter and word configurations. For the little ones, DREAMS is not only beautifully illustrated but is an excellent book for primary language arts. The words simply paint pictures.

Oversized print, repetition, and significant meaning aid in the acquisition of sight vocabulary. Edith Hurd's STOP! STOP! STOP! and HURRY! HURRY! can fulfill these requirements nicely. The imaginative presentation and dramatic pictures of FOUR FUR FEET contribute to both auditory and visual discrimination for beginning readers.

When students begin to examine phonic elements in words, stories written in rhyme and poetry containing rhyme couplets can be introduced. I CAN'T SAID THE ANT offers numerous possibilities, along with other stories and poems using alliteration.

Decoding on the basis of contextual clues applies to nearly all literature. The only literature selections that would not be helpful to the less-than-independent reader in this regard are special form presentations without plot. Free verse and forms of poetry that concentrate on vivid imagery through metaphors provide limited contextual clues.

The beauty of all is that much of this can be done with books that invite the students to 'carry it or put it in your pocket'. The teaching of reading skills is not limited to the basal reader approach. As educators we have commitments to teach the skills using all the resources available to us. The "trade books" in a variety of forms offer us this opportunity.

| AUTHOR | TITLE |
|---|---|
| Crosby Bonsall | And I Mean It, Stanley |
| Barbara Williams | Albert's Toothache |
| Mercer Mayer | You're the Scaredy Cat |
| Suzanne Klein | An Elephant In My Bed |
| Dr. Seuss | Hop on Pop |
| Carla Stevens | Hooray for Pig |
| Constance Greene | The Ears of Louis |
| Syd Hoff | I Should Have Stayed in Bed |
| Sharon Bell Mathis | Sidewalk Story |
| Ann Petry | Johnny Tremain |
| Gladys Baker Bond | A Head on Her Shoulders |
| Theodora Kroeber | Ishi, Last of His Tribe |
| Ruth Wheeler | Bright Sunset: The Story of an Indian Girl |
| Scott O'Dell | Island of the Blue Dolphins |
| Scott O'Dell | Zia |
| Barbara Corcoran | A Dance to Still Music |
| Earl Kager, Sr. | Jocko: A Legend of the American Revolution |
| Matt Christopher | No Arm in Left Field |
| Matt Christopher | Jinx Glove |
| Judy Blume | Are You There, God? It's Me, Margaret! |
| Isabelle Holland | The Man Without a Face |
| Pamela Sykes | Mirror of Danger |
| Judy Blume | Blubber |
| Judith Viorst | Rosie and Michael |
| Barbara Corcoran | The Winds of Time |
| Betty Miles | The Real Me |
| Avi Wortis | No More Magic |
| A. A. Milne | Winnie the Pooh |
| E. B. White | Charlotte's Web |
| Mary Norton | The Borrowers |
| Norton Juster | The Phantom Toll Booth |
| James Thurber | Many Moons |
| Anita Lobel | The Troll Music |
| Roald Dahl | Charlie and the Chocolate Factory |
| Kenneth Grahame | The Wind in the Willows |
| J. R. Tolkien | The Hobbitt |
| Gerald McDermott | Arrow to the Sun: A Pueblo Indian Tale |
| Brian Wildsmith | North Wind and the Sun |
| James Daugherty | Andy and the Lion |
| Alice Walker | Langston Hughes, American Poet |
| Kenneth Rudeen | Roberto Clemente |
| Patricia Clapp | Dr. Elizabeth: A Biography of the First Woman Doctor |
| Tomie dePaola | Watch Out for Chicken Feet in Your Soup |
| Dr. Seuss | If I Ran the Zoo |
| Anita Lobel | The Zoo for Mister Muster |
| Judy Delton | Two Good Friends |
| Richard Lewis | Miracles |
| J. Riddell | Hit or Myth |
| Ruth Krauss | Is This You? |
| Roald Dahl | James and the Giant Peach |
| Louise Fitzhugh | Harriet the Spy |
| Barbara Emberley | Drummer Hoff |
| Louise Bender Scott | Talking Time |
| Karla Kuskin | Roar and More |
| Dr. Seuss | Sam and the Firefly |
| Ruth Krauss | Carrot Seed |
| Crockett John | The Little Fish That Got Away |
| Ezra Jack Keats | Dreams |
| Edith Hurd | Stop! Stop! Stop! |
| Edith Hurd | Hurry! Hurry! |
| Margaret Wise Brown | Four Fur Feet |
| P. Cameron | I Can't Said the Ant |